

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 May 2008

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Children's Services Issues, SEN, Special Schools, Youth Service and Youth Offending Team)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PATMORE

Care Matters - Proposals for use of Grant (including CIC Council) (PN)

In summer last year the government launched *Care Matters: Time for Change*. A package of resources over the next three years intended to improve outcomes for children in care or on the edge of care.

The Bill raises expectations to achieve significant improvements for Looked After Children particularly in terms of educational outcomes, stability of placements, provide alternatives to care and increase children's participation. The grant is worth £229K in 2008/9, £309K in 2009/10 and £354K in 2010/11.

The grant will be committed to the following areas:

- a) Children in Care Council - every Local Authority must set up a *Children in Care Council* with representing directly children in care which will have direct links to the Director of Children's Services and Lead member. *Children in Care Council* in North Yorkshire is already being formed. The proposed cost of the Children in council is £40K which includes 4 modern apprentices on the NYCC apprenticeship scheme and the running costs, admin and published material for the children in care council.
- b) Setting up a unique service framework to support Family and friends care and ensure relatives are always considered before children come into care, which would include establishing a Family Group Conference service. The running costs with staffing and training would be £76K.

A unique service framework for kinship care would include setting up a carers support group and providing specialist training for staff in new assessment practice; the combined cost would be £17K.

- c) Further improvements in support to foster carers; increasing access to specialist training and support is planned with a £20K commitment.
- d) Schools, childcare and early-years settings have a key role in improving outcomes for LAC. The Bill contains proposals that reinforce their role in all five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. There are 125 primary age pupils who are Looked After Children and 167 secondary age children who are Looked After. There is an annual £500 budget for each child in care at risk of falling behind in their education to spend on books and after school activities is proposed. In North Yorkshire it is estimated there are 30 Primary School age and 50 Secondary school age in this group. The cost of this will be £40K.

There will also be a £2,000 bursary for any LAC who move on to university, the estimated cost of which would be £10K.

- e) Funding will be used also to support a small number of placements to be extended to post 18 years for those children who need additional support before they to move to independence. The cost of this is estimated to be £25K.

The grant money to support the implementation of Care Matters should increase our ability to improve outcomes for children in or on the edge of care.

Aiming High for Disabled Children (PN)

North Yorkshire County Council together with the PCT have been successful in securing Pathfinder status under a Government funded initiative to improve the quantity and quality of short breaks for disabled children, young people and their families. The Short Break Pathfinder is one element of the Government's overall strategy 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' and aims to transform short break services. North Yorkshire's Pathfinder scheme will, along with 20 other Local Authorities and PCTs, run a year before the national programme and will provide valuable early experience about developing and providing a greater range of short break opportunities.

The initiative attracts ring fenced revenue funding of over £4million over three years and £750k of capital over two years. A Project Board has been formed to oversee the Programme and plans are well underway to begin the process of increasing the range of services to families and young people.

Integrated Youth Support Service

The responsibility for the delivery of Connexions transferred to NYCC on 1 April 2008 and is being managed as part of Integrated Youth Support (IYS). The venues for the IYS hubs have been identified and are in various stages of leases being transferred or established. There is multi-agency support for the hubs with different partners offering to act as co-ordinators.

38 members of staff from Guidance Services have transferred to NYCC under TUPE. A structure for IYS has been agreed and the NYCC re-organisation process is being conducted with the full involvement of UNISON.

The contract to deliver information, advice and guidance in schools and colleges was awarded to igen. They have now completed their re-organisation and their structure has been established. Schools/colleges should be unaffected by this change and will be receiving the same level of service during the summer term. Igen is currently liaising with schools/colleges to agree their service provision from September 2008 which should result in increased resources to support students from that time.

The prevention programme for the Youth Offending Team has been aligned with IYS. The teenage pregnancy strategy co-ordinator and the joint commissioning manager for young people's drugs and alcohol will be managed within IYS. This is a helpful structural change as it has already enabled better co-ordination of planning

and pooling of resources to increase activity particularly in relation to Targeted Youth Support for the most vulnerable young people.

NYCC has been assessed by Government Office for its development of Targeted Youth Support and has consistently been rated highly. As a result NYCC is deemed to be 'light touch' Authority for the purposes of Government Office monitoring.

Foster Carers Conference 26th April 2008

An annual event for North Yorkshire foster carers was held in April to bring together foster carers and practitioners from all over the county. The conference was attended by more than 100 foster carers and practitioner delegates.

The conference was organised into three main sections; training and information; consultation; and celebration. Professor Ian Sinclair of York University provided a review of research messages about foster care and Jim Bond of Fostering Network talked about foster carers needs. The conference also undertook a systematic consultation with carers about what they need locally and what works best in foster care support.

The conference ended with a celebration and awards for long serving foster care who had cared for children in North Yorkshire from between 10 and in some cases more than 30 years. The conference was a huge success and feedback from carers has been very positive. It is likely this event will grow in size year on year.

County Councillor Caroline Patmore
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